

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE OF WORSHIP
December 24, 2020

PRELUDE “The Manger” Al Van Der Beek, Jon Schmidt and Steven Sharp Nelson
Clarinet and Piano – Marie Hanselman and Priscilla Yuen

[Clarinet \(w/piano\)](#)

CALL TO WORSHIP

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

Those who lived in the land of deep darkness, on them light has shined.

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us.

Let the heavens be glad, let all the earth rejoice!

CAROL #41 “O Come, All Ye Faithful”

John Francis Wade

<https://vimeo.com/248545000>

O come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant, O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.

Come and behold Him, Born the King of angels!

O come, let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!

Sing choirs of angels, Sing in exaltation! Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!

Glory to God, all Glory in the highest!

O come, let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, Born this happy morning, Jesus, to Thee be all glory given;

Word of the Father, Now in flesh appearing!

O come, let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!

PRAYER OF ADORATION

Holy God, come into this holy night with stars to light our way to the cradle of peace. Come with angels to sing us to a deep joy. Come to this moment and open our hearts so we may hear the familiar story new and fresh. Surprise us and remind us that the child in the manger is Emmanuel – God with Us – now and always. Amen.

<https://vimeo.com/309158970>

Angels we have heard on high, Sweetly singing o’er the plains,
And the mountains in reply Echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherd, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heavenly song?
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

See him in a manger laid, Whom the choirs of angels praise.
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid While our hearts in love we raise.
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

CALL TO CONFESSION

This is the night we are reminded that God loves to be with us. Yet all too often – by our choices, our words, our silence – we choose not to be with God. Let us pray this holy night to the one who was born to gift us with mercy and hope.

PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS

Lord, we have lived far too long in the dark places of our own making. We have walled ourselves in, shut the world out, and held ourselves captive to our fear and failings.

Free us from this place, Lord. Return us to a life in your presence, where we may face the trials of this world with you by our side. Restore light to our eyes that we may behold anew your love in our lives. Hear us and help us, we pray.

We wait in eager anticipation, for the glory of your salvation this night. Amen.

ANTHEM **“O Holy Night”**
Ted Fennell, Tim Forster, Alla Kuznetsov

Adolphe Adam

O Holy Night

O Holy night! The stars are brightly shining
It is the night of our dear Savior's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining
'Til He appeared and the soul felt its worth.

A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.
Fall on your knees; O hear the Angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born
O night, O night divine, O night divine!

Chains shall He break, for the slave is our brother
And in His name, all oppression shall cease
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we
Let all within us Praise His Holy name
Christ is the Lord; forever, ever praise be!
Noel, noel, O night, O night divine.
Noel, noel, O night, O night divine.

SCRIPTURE – Isaiah 9:2-7

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
Those who lived in land of deep darkness – on them light has shined.

You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy;
They rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder.

For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

For all the boots of the trampling warriors and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;
authority rests on his shoulders;
And he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore.

The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will do this.

<https://vimeo.com/491755619>

It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, goodwill to all, from heaven's all gracious King:"
The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.

For lo, the days are hastening on, by prophet bards foretold,
When with the ever circling years shall come the time foretold;
When peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world give back the song which now the angels sing.

SCRIPTURE – Luke 1:26-33, 38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."

But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus.

He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David.

He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

ANTHEM “Lo How a Rose E’er Blooming” (sung by the JCPC choir)

Lo How A Rose Er Blooming

Lo, how a rose e’er blooming from tender stem hath sprung,
Of Jesse’s lineage coming, by faithful prophets sung.
It came a floweret bright, amid the cold of winter,
When half spent was the night.

Isaiah ‘twas foretold it, the rose I have in mind,
With Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.
To show God’s love aright, She bore to us a Savior,
When half spent was the night.

SCRIPTURE – Matthew 1:18-21

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

Her husband, Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly.

But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

CAROL #25 “Away in a Manger”

Attr. James R. Murray

<https://vimeo.com/243547922>

**Away in a manger, no crib for a bed, The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay, The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

**The cattle are lowing, the poor Baby wakes, But little Lord Jesus no crying He makes.
I love Thee Lord Jesus, look down from the sky, And stay by my cradle ‘til morning is nigh.**

**Be near me Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And take us to heaven to live with Thee there.**

SCRIPTURE – Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth because he was descended from the house and family of David.

He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for in the inn

ANTHEM “Mary’s Lullaby” (sung by the JCPC choir)

Mary’s Lullaby

See the child that Mary bore On her lap so softly sleeping
In a stable cold and poor Ox and ass their vigil keeping

Sing lullaby, sing lullaby, My own dear son, my child
Lullaby, sing lullaby, Lullaby, my little baby

Flights of angels round his head Sing him joyful hymns of greeting
Peace on earth, goodwill to men Each to each the song repeating

Sing lullaby, sing lullaby My own dear son, my child
Lullaby, sing lullaby, Lullaby, my little baby

Shepherds kneeling by his bed Offer homage without measure
Wise men, by a bright star led Bring him gifts of richest treasure

Sing lullaby, sing lullaby My own dear son, my child
Lullaby, sing lullaby, Lullaby, my little baby

SCRIPTURE – Luke 2:8-14

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified,

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.”

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

ANTHEM “Were We Dreaming?” (sung by the JCPC choir)

Cary Ratcliff

Were We Dreaming

Were we dreaming
when the sky turned white and the angels called and the land was bright, were we dreaming?

Were we dreaming
Hearing God and earth shall be met this night by this promised child?
Were we dreaming

SCRIPTURE – Luke 2:15-20

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.”

So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them.

But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

ANTHEM

“Little Drummer Boy” (sung by the JCPC choir)

Little Drummer Boy

Come thy told me (Pa rum pum pum-pum)
A newborn King to see (Pa rum pum pum-pum)
Our finest gifts we bring (Pa rum pum pum-pum)
To lay before the king (Pa rum pum pum-pum, Rum pum pum-pum, Rum pum pum-pum)
So to honor Him (Pa rum pum pum-pum) When we come

Baby Jesus (Pa rum pum pum-pum)
I am a poor boy too (Pa rum pum pum-pum)
I have no gift to bring (Pa rum pum pum-pum)
That's fit to give our King (Pa rum pum pum-pum, Rum pum pum-pum, Rum pum pum-pum)
Shall I play for you (Pa rum pum pum-pum) On my drum

Mary nodded (Pa rum pum pum-pum)
The ox and lamb kept time (Pa rum pum pum-pum)
I played my drum for Him (Pa rum pum pum-pum)
I played my best for Him (Pa rum pum pum-pum, Rum pum pum-pum, Rum pum pum-pum)

Then He smiled at me (Pa rum pum pum-pum)
Me and my drum

PRAYER

Glorious God, on this Christmas Eve, we sing beloved carols of Bethlehem, of shepherds and angels, of Mary and Joseph, and the infant Jesus, our Savior. Is there yet a new song we can sing to you? A song to be learned from the heavens and the earth: where the roar of the sea, the exaltation of the fields, and the joy of the trees are already raised in a chorus of glad rejoicing, ready to welcome you.

Even if no ear may hear your coming, help us to hear the music of creation. Then, with the wisdom of the cosmos, we will sing of your salvation, declare your glory, and in a crescendo of praise, bless your name: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace! Amen.

ANTHEM**“Glory Be Unto God in the Highest”** (sung by the JCPC choir)**Glory Be Unto God****MESSAGE “Joy to the World”**

Rev. Marie Hanselman

This has been a challenging year, to say the least. Although I am sure there are those among us who have lived through much more difficult times. We live in a broken world, a world where God’s gift of free will allows us to choose daily the way in which we will live. Sometimes making those choices is hard and sometimes it is just so clear as to what is right in the eyes of God.

But in the midst of our brokenness, how do we say, “Peace on earth?”

- When Covid brings about suffering and death worldwide?
- When we cannot gather with family and friends far and near during this holy season?
- When politics divide us to the point where we cannot even stop and listen to one another?
- When refugees have lost or abandoned their homeland because of war or terrorism or famine?

How do we sing “Joy to the World?”

- When people are without work and unable to support their families.
- When you have said goodbye to a loved one who has returned home to the everlasting arms of Jesus?
- When people are homeless and hungry?
- When we or loved ones are facing difficult medical diagnoses?
- When *you fill in the blank.*

Daily, we follow the news of tragedy and pain throughout the world. So much so that we may even feel guilty at times for wanting to continue with Christmas traditions.

But we also have a deep longing to experience peace and joy, and in the midst of tragedy and brokenness, there is still a reason to sing joy to the world and peace on earth.

We celebrate Christmas *because* of heartache, pain, grief and tragedies.
We **need** a wonderful counselor. We long for a savior to fix our broken world.

Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus *because of the brokenness*.

Christmas is deeper, stronger, and more important than the gifts.

- Christmas is staring evil in the face and saying, "You will not win."
- Christmas is choosing forgiveness over revenge.
- Christmas is working towards a better world.
- Christmas is praying for peace on Earth.
- Christmas is learning that hope and love are greater than despair.

This year, many people may have tears streaming while singing Christmas songs, but sing on we must.

Sing about joy and peace on Earth.

Sing about love and comfort this Christmas.

Those are words of hope for our future and a call to action for our present.

SPECIAL MUSIC **"Joy to the World"**

<https://vimeo.com/17891060>

A CHRISTMAS AFFIRMATION OF FAITH *by Nathan Nettleton*

**We believe in God, the creator and giver of life,
who brought all creation to birth, who mothers us and fathers us,
protecting, nurturing, and cherishing us.**

**We believe in Jesus Christ: God born among us as a fragile baby,
embodying both love and the need for love,
and calling us to rest in God as trustingly as a tiny child.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, breathed into us at our birth,
always drawing us on to be born again, encouraging, exhorting, comforting, nourishing our
growth and inspiring our living.**

**We believe in the reconciliation of the world to God, through Christ.
Hunted at birth and humiliated at death, Christ entered our fearful darkness so that we
might enter his glorious light and share the life of his resurrection.**

**And we believe that each new child is a glimpse of the face of God,
a sign of the life to come, and a call to live in peace and celebrate living together.**

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth.

Amen.

ANTHEM "The Angels Carol"
Sung by Sarah and Laura Best

John Rutter

Angel's Carol

Have you heard the sound of the angel voices
ringing out so sweetly, ringing out so clear?

Have you seen the star shining out so brightly
as a sign from God that Christ the Lord is here?

Have you heard the news that they bring from heaven
to the humble shepherds who have waited long?

Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Hear the angels sing their joyful song.

He is come in peace in the winter's stillness
like a gentle snowfall in the gentle night.

He is come in joy like the sun at morning filling all the world
with radiance and with light.

He is come in love as the child of Mary.
In a simple stable we have seen his birth.

Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Hear the angels singing: 'Peace on earth'.

He will bring new light to a world in darkness
like a bright star shining in the skies above.

He will bring new hope to the waiting nations.
When he comes to reign in purity and love.

Let the earth rejoice at the Savior's coming.
Let the heavens answer with the joyful morn:

Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Hear the angels singing Christ is born.

CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Lord Jesus, before whom the Magi laid their gifts, whom humble shepherds worshipped, accept our praises as we celebrate your birth at Bethlehem. We ask that as we make this a holy night upon which to remember your birth on earth, so our hearts would be illuminated with the brightness of your one true light, Jesus Christ our Lord, born in us this day.

Prince of Peace, born among us. As we share together the most profound mystery of your birth among us, so we pray that you would fill us with your peace. Pour into our hearts that peace which we so desperately seek, and which you alone can give. May we live as children of the same heavenly Father, willing to share our love for you and also to listen to the faith of others, that together your people may be one. Awaken in our hearts, love and gratitude for all that you have done for us and may our joyful hearts share in the message of the angels to all humankind.

We remember those for whom Christmas will be difficult. Lord Jesus, you were laid in a humble manger because there was no room for you in the inn. Have mercy, we pray, on all who cannot share our happiness this Christmas time. We are mindful of the poor and the hungry, the sick and those separated from the ones they love. By your love poured out at Bethlehem, guard, guide and comfort those for whom we pray this night. Amen.

SCRIPTURE – John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him.

But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born not of blood or the will of the flesh or the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

CANDLE LIGHTING LITANY

The Christ child was sent into the world as a glorious light to give joy, peace and goodwill to all the world. May we as followers of Him who is the light of the world, light our candles in this holy hour and then go out beyond these walls to carry His light to others.

We light our candles to give light to all places where there is warfare and human suffering tonight.

We light our candles to show tired and hungry people the way to Christ and to the warmth and love of Christian fellowship.

As we feel the sacredness of this hour, may these lights burn not just for tonight but through all the year as we seek to share the beauty and power of Christ's light. May we be God's candles burning in a dark world.

CAROL #60

"Silent Night, Holy Night"

Franz Xaver Gruber

<https://vimeo.com/489813645>

**Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright,
Round yon virgin mother and child! Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.**

**Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories stream from heaven afar, Heav'nly hosts sing, Alleluia!
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!**

**Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from your holy face, With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth, Jesus, Lord, at your birth.**

BLESSING

Go in wonder to bring light to those in darkness and joy to those who can find no joy.
Go with the song of angels in your ears, and the love of God in your hearts.
Go and spread the word – the babe of Bethlehem is born.

POSTLUDE "Greensleeves"

<https://vimeo.com/71152951>